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Birmingham, Alabama

**Coosa River Baptist Association**

v. 1. 1850	v. 12. 1869
v. 2. 1852	v. 13. 1870
v. 3. 1853	v. 14. 1872
v. 4. 1854	v. 15. 1874
v. 5. 1855	v. 16. 1875
v. 6. 1856	v. 17. 1877
v. 7. 1858	v. 18. 1878
v. 8. 1859	v. 19. 1879
v. 9. 1860	v. 20. 1880
v. 10. 1861	v. 21. 1881
v. 11. 1866	v. 22. 1882

1854 - *Georgia*  
 1855 - *Coldwater*  
 Talladega 1856 - *New York*  
 1857 - *North Carolina*  
 1858 - *Liberty*  
 1859 - *Putnam*  
 1860 - *Cocoa Valley*  
 ALABAMA BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 MINUTES.

*Cocoa*

The Association convened pursuant to adjournment, with the Liberty Church in Talladega county, on Saturday, September 16th, 1854.

The Introductory Sermon was preached by Elder H. E. TALLAFERRO, from John xvii: 5.

After an intermission, the Association was called to order and opened with prayer, by the former Moderator, JORDAN WILLIAMS.

The Letters from the Churches were read by L. W. LAWLER and J. L. M. CURRY, which authorized the following Delegates to represent them in the Association:

CHURCHES.		DELEGATES.	
1st District.	Friendship.....	W. C. WITT,* E. D. Lewis, J. B. Starnes.*	
	Cold Water.....	W. W. Matison, J. Wright,* D. Heaton.*	
	Sulphur Springs.....	J. Baker, J. T. Findley,* W. A. Norton.*	
	Bethlehem.....	M. GARRETT, W. Bean, T. Wadsworth.	
	Antioch.....	S. G. JENKINS, A. D. Waldrop, J. H. Long.*	
	Salt Creek.....	J. Neighbors, E. Adams,* T. Gann.*	
	Salem.....	E. MARTIN, W. Towery, T. Sims.*	
	Blue Eye.....	J. H. Franklin, A. Truss, J. Embry.	
	Refuge.....	WM. McCALIN, W. J. Young, J. J. Britt.	
	New Hope.....	N. E. Dollar, John Woods,* A. W. Linder.*	
2d District.	Refuge.....	GEORGE WILKEY, W. B. Jones, W. N. Braden.*	
	Front Creek.....	C. L. Davis, S. G. Morgan,* W. M. Stepp.*	
	Lebanon.....	W. CURRY, W. H. Sims, J. L. M. Curry.	
	Good Hope.....	H. E. TALLAFERRO, P. E. COLLIER, James Headen.	
	Hephzibah.....	T. CALLEY,* T. Hitt, William Simon.	
	Talladega.....	O. WELCH, L. W. Lawler, C. R. Cross.	
	Tallachatchee.....	T. Boas, E. Matthis, W. B. Funderburg.*	
	Kynulga.....	W. Boyd, W. M. Pennington,* S. Fulmer.*	
	Mount Zion.....	JOHN CAFFEE,* W. H. Womble, B. Fluker.	
	Port Williams.....	D. Wallis, W. B. Hammett, M. B. Bennett.*	
3d District.	Pine Spring.....	J. P. RAYDON,* C. Wallis, F. M. Childers.*	
	Big Spring.....	J. M. SCOTT,* E. Posey, F. Finney.	
	Spring Creek.....	W. T. Williamson, H. Wadsworth,* L. J. Baker.*	
	Macedonia.....	J. H. Posey, D. H. Thvest, J. M. Randle.*	
	Mount Pleasant.....	J. D. Innes, L. A. Goss,* E. W. Innes.*	
	Cocoa Valley.....	J. A. COLLIER, John Bell, T. S. Bacon.*	
	Mount Ararat.....	JAMES FOREMAN, T. M. HARBIN, L. A. Gibson.	
	Liberty.....	J. T. Cox, J. R. Wellborn, M. Maulden.	
	Crooked Creek.....	Jesse Garrett, W. H. Hardy, W. S. Burson.*	
	Union.....	A. Walden, E. Freeman, J. H. Baker.	
4th District.	Concord.....	H. R. Johnston, J. W. Caldwell, C. Davis.	
	Hatchet Creek.....	F. Ledbetter, J. Hawthorn, S. Tate.*	
	Rocky Mount.....	W. B. CONNELL, H. Machen, W. R. Owens.*	
	Pleasant Hill.....	B. M. Davis, William Brooks, J. E. Williamson.*	

NOTE.—A \* denotes Absentees.—Ordained Ministers in SMALL CAPITALS.—Licentiates in Italic.

*Out of file*  
*Chiles m. G. G.*

The Association went into an election of officers, which resulted in the choice of Elder JESSE A. COLLINS as Moderator, and J. L. M. CURRY as Clerk.

Pleasant Hill and Rocky Mount Churches petitioned for admission to membership in the body; having been found orthodox, they were admitted and attached to the fourth District.

An extract from the letter of Lebanon Church, in reference to Chiles McGee, was ordered to be printed in the Minutes. (See Appendix A.)

The Committee appointed at last meeting, to revise the Rules of Decorum, submitted the Rules, as amended, and the report was received and adopted.

Correspondence was called for, when we received from Central Association brethren H. L. Harlan and H. J. Hickey, with a package of Minutes; from Arbacoochy, brethren J. C. Beverly and A. Leverett, with Minutes; from Ten Islands, a Letter and Minutes, by brother T. P. Guinn; and from the Convention, a package of Minutes, by brethren Welch and Taliaferro.

The Moderator announced the following Committees: *To arrange the Religious Services*—W. Curry, Johnston, Tower, J. H. Posey, Cox, Wellborn, Maulden; *On Finance*—Lawler, Headen, Truss; *On Documents*—Taliaferro, Williams, Foreman.

To report to the next Association, Committees were appointed: *On Domestic Missions*—Taliaferro, Garrett, Williams, McCain; *On Temperance*—P. E. Collins, Jenkins, Truss; *On Sabbath Schools*—Womble, Harbin, Headen; *To revise the Constitution*—Williams, Lawler, Welch, Taliaferro, J. L. M. Curry.

Liberty Church, through her Pastor, brother Martin, requested the Association to suggest a Presbytery to aid her in the ordination of an Elder and a Deacon. The request was granted, and the Moderator appointed brethren Williams, Welch, Jenkins and Taliaferro to act as the Presbytery.

Adjourned until Monday morning at 8 o'clock. Prayer, by brother McCain.

#### LORD'S DAY, September 17, 1851.

Religious services were conducted during the day, by Elders Garrett, Williams, Jenkins and J. A. and P. E. Collins. Brother P. E. Collins preached the Missionary Sermon, from John iii: 16—after which, a collection was taken up, amounting to \$52 20.

MONDAY MORNING, 8 A. M., Sept. 18, 1854.

The Delegates met, and after singing an appropriate hymn, prayer was offered by brother Williams.

The roll was called, and the Rules of Decorum were read.

#### APPOINTED CORRESPONDENCE,

To *Canaan Association*—E. Mann, J. H. Posey and J. H. Franklin—Franklin to write. To *Tallasahatchee*—Jenkins, Williams, J. A. Collins, Garrett, Witt and Lewis—Jenkins to write. To *Central*—Taliaferro, Welch, Womble and J. A. Collins—Womble to write. To *Liberty*—J. A. Collins, Foreman and Ashcraft—Foreman to write. To *Arbacoochy*—Harbin, Foreman, Williams and Gibson—Harbin to write. To *Ten Islands*—McCain, Williams, Jenkins, Garrett and J. A. Collins—Garrett to write. To *Shelby*—Welch, Scott, Boaz, Wallis and J. A. Collins—Welch to write. To *State Convention*—Welch, Taliaferro, J. A. Collins, P. E. Collins, Womble, J. L. M. Curry, Harbin, Jenkins, Headen, McCain, Williams, Posey, Mattison and Wright. Taliaferro to write.

A letter of Dismissal was granted to Refuge Church to join Ten Islands Association.

An election was held for the following positions: To *preach the Introductory Sermon*—Brother O. Welch; brother Wm. McCain, alternate. To *preach the Missionary Sermon*—Brother J. A. Collins; brother H. E. Taliaferro, alternate. To *write the Circular*—Brother L. W. Lawler; J. L. M. Curry, alternate.

The Circular Letter was read, adopted, and ordered to be printed—(See Appendix B.)

The Report of the Board of Directors of the "Baptist Male High School" was then read, as follows:

#### REPORT.

The Board of Directors of the "Baptist Male High School" submit their third annual report:

At the last session of the Legislature the Board obtained an act of incorporation, increasing the number of Directors, and enlarging their powers.

The school building is rapidly going up, and the entire brick work will be completed by the middle of October. Since our last report, contracts for executing the wood work and furnishing the marble necessary for the building have been entered into, and the Board are happy to assure all who feel interested that they expect the whole building to be completed and ready for use by the close of the next summer session of the school.

Elder P. E. Collins having retired from the school, the Board of Directors felicitate themselves and the public at

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Elder P. E. Collins having retired from the school, the Board of Directors felicitate themselves and the public at

their good fortune in securing the services of Professor John Wilmer, as Principal. His energy, faithfulness, ripe scholarship and aptness in teaching are ample guaranties for the success of the Institution. With him, has been associated W. S. Jeffries, a late graduate of the University of Alabama, who brings high testimonials of moral worth and mental culture. The school, under their auspices, has opened successfully, and offers the strongest inducements for the patronage of an enlightened public.

Some valuable donations of Books and Minerals have been made to the school by kind and liberal friends; and the Board most earnestly renews its request for contributions of curiosities, minerals, fossils, shells, &c.; for the Cabinet, and of books for the Library. The names of the donors shall be carefully and gratefully preserved in connexion with their gifts.

Rufus Mynatt has resigned as one of the Board of Directors, and his place has been supplied by Green T. McAfee. Of this appointment, the act of incorporation requires us to give notice to the Association.

JAMES HEADEN,  
*President of Board.*

#### REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee to superintend the mission in the bounds of the Association, report: That, in accordance with the heretofore expressed will of the Association, the money has been appropriated to feeble and destitute Churches, viz To Trout Creek, \$15; to New Hope, \$15; to Union, \$15; to Refuge, in St. Clair, \$15—making in all, \$60.

Respectfully submitted, JAS. HEADEN, Ch'n.

The report was accepted, and brethren Headen, Cross, Mattison, Sims and W. Chrry were appointed the Executive Committee for the ensuing year.

The money collected on yesterday, was ordered to be paid over to brother J. A. Collins, Agent for the Domestic Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Committee on Finance reported, that they had received the following amounts, viz:

For Home Missions, from Wm. Jenkins, jr.	\$50 00
“ “ Churches	21 00—\$71 00
For printing the Minutes	59 75
“ Association Fund	36 00
Public collection on Sabbath	32 20
Total received	\$198 75

L. W. LAWLER, Ch'n.

Wade H. Sims, was appointed Treasurer, and the money in the hands of the Committee on Finance was ordered to be paid over to him.

The Life Directors of the "Coosa River Book Society" tendered to the Association the money and books on hand belonging to that Society.

On motion, a Committee was appointed to receive them of G. T. McAfee, the Depository Agent of said Society. To the same Committee discretion was given to superintend and manage the whole matter, to devise and execute plans to increase the funds, and report to the next Association. The Moderator appointed brethren Headen, Stone, Welch, J. L. M. Curry, Taliaferro, Lawler, Wilmer and Jones.

#### STANDING RESOLUTIONS.

*Resolved*, That any member of this body present at the State Convention, or any Association with which we correspond, is authorized to present himself as a corresponding messenger.

*Resolved*, That the Treasurer shall pay out the money sent for associational purposes *only* to Preachers attending Convention or sister Associations.

Ordered, that the Clerk receive twenty dollars for his services, superintend the printing of the Minutes, and distribute to the Churches in proportion to the money contributed by them for Minutes.

#### RESOLUTIONS.

Whereas, another watchman upon the walls of Zion has fallen, in the person of Elder THOMAS CHILTON; and while we should bow in meek submission to every dispensation of God, yet we deem it a Christian duty, and esteem it a privilege, to bear testimony to departed worth; therefore—

*Resolved*, That we have heard of the death of our brother Thomas Chilton with the most profound emotion; that we remember him as an exemplary and zealous Christian, and an able and efficient Minister of the Gospel, who dispensed the Word of Life in its purity—who boldly proclaimed its truths and faithfully practised its precepts, and whose whole heart and mind were engaged for the salvation of sinners; that as a member of this Association for many years, we call to mind with melancholy pleasure his affable manners, his brotherly affection, his wisdom in counsel and his ability in debate; and we commend to our brethren in their Christian intercourse the example of this lamented brother.

*Resolved*, That our brother, Elder JESSE A. COLLINS, agent for the State of Alabama for the Domestic Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, is eminently worthy of the confidence reposed in him by said Board.



*Resolved*, That the subject of Domestic Missions is earnestly commended to all the Churches; and in the opinion of this Association, it is the imperative duty of every Christian to contribute to this object, as God has prospered him.

*Resolved*, That the Churches are earnestly requested to send contributions for this purpose, to be paid over to the Domestic Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, or to the Executive Committee of the Association.

*Resolved*, That we recommend to the Churches the cultivation of a higher degree of spirituality, more complete exactitude in duty, and a more enlarged liberality for the promotion of the cause of the blessed Redeemer.

*Resolved*, That the cordial thanks of the Association be tendered to the tent-holders, the brethren and sisters of Liberty Church, and to the community, for their kindness and hospitality.

After prayer, by brother McCain, and some appropriate and impressive remarks from the Moderator, the Association adjourned, to meet with Cold Water Church, on Saturday, September 15, 1855.

JESSE A. COLLINS,

J. L. M. CURRY, Clerk.

Moderator.

#### DISTRIBUTING AGENTS.

First District.....	W. Towery, U. E. Dollar,
Second " .....	James Headen,
Third " .....	D. Wallis, J. H. Posey,
Fourth " .....	H. R. Johnston.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Walker Reynolds,  
Oliver Welch,  
H. E. Taliaferro,  
J. L. M. Curry,  
Matthew Turner,  
Levi W. Lawler,  
J. M. Roberts,

James Headen,  
William Curry,  
S. G. Jenkins,  
W. W. Mattison,  
Wm. R. Stone,  
Wm. Mallory,  
G. T. McAfee.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

James Headen,  
C. R. Cross,

W. W. Mattison,  
William Curry,

Wade H. Sims.

#### BOOK COMMITTEE.

Oliver Welch,  
Wm. R. Stone,  
H. E. Taliaferro,  
John Wilmer,

James Headen,  
J. L. M. Curry,  
L. W. Lawler,  
T. W. Jones.

## CLERK OF ASSOCIATION.

J. L. M. Curry..... Talladega, Alabama.

## CAMP MEETINGS.

Wewokaville—Embracing first Sabbath in September,  
Cold Water, “ “ “ “ “ “

## ADDRESS OF MINISTERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

<i>Ordained Ministers.</i>	<i>Post Offices.</i>
H. E. Taliaferro.....	Talladega.
P. E. Collins.....	“
John Wilmer.....	“
Thomas Calley.....	“
Oliver Welch.....	Wewokaville.
W. B. Connell.....	“
S. G. Jenkins.....	Silver Run.
Jordan Williams.....	“
William McCain.....	Easta Boga.
Elijah Martin.....	“
H. D. Acher.....	“
M. Garrett.....	Boiling Springs.
W. C. Witt.....	Oxford.
James Foreman.....	Bluff Springs.
T. M. Harbin.....	“
J. A. Collins.....	Cropwell.
James Truss.....	“
J. M. Scott.....	Harpersville.
John Caffey.....	Syllacogga.
J. J. Bullington.....	“
William Richards.....	Bowdon.

## LICENTIATES.

J. P. Rawdon.....	Fayetteville.
W. H. Womble.....	Syllacogga.
Lewis Turner.....	Kelly's Creek.
James Fulmer.....	“
William Kidd.....	Harpersville.
J. H. Franklin.....	Kingsville.
J. R. Webster.....	Marion.
J. C. Foster.....	“
J. C. Wright.....	“
Rufus Mattison.....	“
W. J. Young.....	Talladega.

## DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

Jesse A. Collins, Agent for the Board for Domestic Missions, Southern Baptist Convention, acknowledges the following contributions made by Churches and individuals to that object. The contributions, in pledges and cash, are placed to the credit of the Churches where individuals held their membership, although the subscriptions may not have been made at a public meeting. The Agent takes this occasion to tender his thanks to Pastors and Deacons for their kind co-operation, and to friends and brethren for their liberality.

<i>Names.</i>	<i>Am't.</i>
Macedonia.....	\$15 05
Salem .....	21 75
Cold Water.....	37 25
Antioch .....	5 00
Friendship .....	15 75
Sulphur Springs.....	25 00
Lebanon .....	52 75
Good Hope.....	39 60
Mount Zion.....	35 25
Blue Eye.....	25 00
Refuge, (Tall.).....	25 00
Spring Creek.....	7 75
Big Spring.....	9 50
Hephzibah.....	10 50
Kymulga.....	4 25
Fort Williams, (not visited,).....	1 50
Pine Spring.....	7 65
John P. Rawdon.....	20 00
Elizabeth Rawdon.....	5 00
Susan Rawdon.....	1 00
Talladega.....	48 00
Tallasehatchie .....	5 25
Bethlehem.....	11 00
Coosa Valley, (supposed,).....	25 00
Mount Pleasant ".....	10 50
Public collection at Association, for Domestic Mis... ..	25 45
Foreign Missions.....	6 75
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$496 50</b>

The following amounts were paid by individuals and Churches to J. D. Williams, Agent, for the Alabama Baptist Bible Society.

Mount Zion.....	\$14 75
Good Hope.....	27 25
	<hr/>
	<b>\$42 00</b>

Amount brought forward.....	\$42 90
J. P. Rawdon.....	10 00
Thomas Calley.....	5 00
Talladega.....	43 00
Big Spring.....	18 10
William Curry.....	10 00
	<hr/>
	\$128 10

## APPENDIX.

[A]

*Extract from the Letter of Lebanon Church.*

The Association will not fail to perceive the omission of a name from our Delegates, *Chiles McGee*, which has long been endeared to the Churches. Brother McGee was Clerk of this Church from June, 1834, to the time of his death—a period of twenty years. For several years he also officiated as Deacon. But it is in his connexion with the Association that you will feel his loss. He was a Delegate to the first session of the Association, and, saving two years, he continued uninterruptedly a member until this. At its second session he was elected Clerk, and remained so for six years. For the last four years he was its Treasurer. For ten years he was a constant, laborious and active member of the Executive Board—having charge of the Domestic Mission—and “gave to that subject his zealous and unremitting attention.” He often served on important Committees, and wrote several Circular Letters.

Our brother was born in North Carolina, about the year, 1795. In 1819 he removed to Washington county in this State, and there, in 1824, united himself with the Baptist Church. He soon removed to Perry county, and remained until 1834, when he removed to Talladega county. On the 23d of March, 1854, he died at his residence, in the 59th year of his age. Brother McGee was emphatically a good man, a meek man, of unobtrusive, unaffected, undoubted piety, of tender heart, warm affections and active benevolence. A distinguishing peculiarity of his Church membership was his punctuality at all Church meetings; the scrupulous fulfilment of his duties, and great zeal for the interests of the Church. In all Church difficulties, his advice was sought and accepted. In all plans of benevolence, his suggestions were thoughtful, prudent and liberal. In sickness,

his prayers and attention were given, and sometimes the arms of his stronger faith and more experienced piety bore the fainting spirit up, amid the terrors of dissolution.

Brother McGee's life was marked by no actions such as the world calls *great*. His record on earth and on high is, that he was a *good* man—that he fulfilled, in great degree, the measure of his obligations. During his long and painful illness, he was patient, tranquil, resigned and uncomplaining. The nature of his disease was such that much conversation was forbidden; but a day or two before his death, to inquiring and sympathising friends he said—"O! I should like to be able to speak, and tell my brethren and friends something of the consolations of religion on a sick bed!" It was otherwise ordered. That meek endurance, that patience of hope, that firm confidence which had so often supported and cheered others now sustained him in the "swellings of Jordan."

Calmly, mildly, hopefully he died, as die the righteous.

"So fades a summer cloud away;  
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;  
So gently shuts the eye of day;  
So dies a wave along the shore."

[B]

### CIRCULAR LETTER.

I propose to call your attention to some desultory reflections upon the *developments of Baptist principles*; and as Bos-suit, the eloquent French Preacher, was accustomed to advise Romanists in their controversies with Protestants to begin with the subject of the Church, so I would direct you to the same, as of fundamental importance in the great religious movements of the present age. Although Baptists have had but little connexion with the Tractarian disputes, in which Papists and Prelatists, High Churchmen and Low Churchmen have been engaged, yet as truth has been evolved by the conflict, their principles have, in many cases, been acknowledged as the natural and legitimate antagonism of papistical and prelatical pretensions. "The true meaning and sacred import of the Scriptures," untrammelled by tradition and ecclesiastical authority, is the proper arbitrament for the settlement of the vexed question of "the Church of Christ, in its idea, attributes and ministry." A visible Church, according to Scriptures and Baptist belief, is not dependent upon external and outward qualities, nor is its claim to that character to be determined by the features of its ministry.

The Romanist holds that the Church is an institution in which men are placed in order to be made holy, possessed of certain marks or attributes, such as unity, catholicity, apostolicity, &c.; that episcopacy is essential to the very idea of a Church, and without a Bishop, "there is no covenanted grace, no legitimate ministry, no sacraments;" and that the power of coercion is committed to the Bishop, "the repository of the Church's legislative and executive authority." With Baptists, the Church is a society of those in vital union with the Savior by faith, a congregation of baptised believers; and as essential to true Church membership, a man must have undergone an inward change and been "born again of the water and the spirit;" and the ministry springs up from the Church "as a supply for a felt want."

Those "born again," or Christians, feel a desire for close and intimate union, and have a right to organize themselves for the promotion of piety, for the diffusion of the Gospel, for maintaining the worship of Christ, and for spiritual purposes exclusively—taking God's revealed Word as the only rule of faith and practice. This union, for such purposes, should be voluntary—composed of those "made willing in the day of God's power"—giving an intelligent, rational, unconstrained assent to the basis of union. Persons are not born into that union or covenant, nor should the fires of the Inquisition, the sword of the Conqueror, nor legal pains and penalties coerce conformity thereto and compliance therewith. No hereditary transmission of virtue, no descent from particular parentage, no relationship to particular parties, gives any special claim, or right, or privilege. "Divine grace is not a hereditament. The devout Edwards was the ancestor of the profligate and thrice-hardened Aaron Burr." The taint of original sin is universal; the child of a King or Saint is *naturally* as averse from God as the child of the worst sinner on earth—and regenerate, baptised believers are only entitled to admission into that union, and these by their personal and spontaneous consent.

This voluntary association of believers; this Church—or, as the Greek word primarily implies, this Congregation—is a sovereign, independent, separate organization, so far as other bodies of a like character are concerned—drawing all its authority and powers from Christ, its Head and Founder; and accountable directly, immediately and solely to Him for all its proceedings. Baptists hold to the freedom and independence of the Churches, their equal powers and rights, their freedom from all spiritual servitude, the perfect equality of the members, the parity of the ministry, the election of all officers by the members, and the absolute right and duty of each Church to interpret for herself the Scriptures, and to

prescribe the terms, duties and privileges of her membership. Recognizing each Church as a complete and distinct body, independent of all earthly control, equal with all others, acknowledging no superior but Christ, and accountable to Him only as her sole Head and Lawgiver, a union or association of Churches—however beneficial in obtaining concert and co-operation—does not confer additional power; in truth, has no Church power whatever, and its decisions are no farther obligatory, than as each Church may regard them as according with the Scriptures. Complete as a Church is in itself, for all the purposes of its formation, an aggregation of Churches has no superior judicial, legislative or executive authority. The freedom, equality, independence and sovereignty of the Churches have been, through long ages of oppression and martyrdom, through adverse and prosperous seasons, regarded by Baptists as the great bulwark of religious freedom, the safest preserver of purity of doctrine, and the surest guaranty against civil or ecclesiastical domination.

Another distinguishing principle of Baptists is the denial to a Church—and therefore to *all* Churches—of legislative, and the admission of the possession only of executive power. Having regard solely to the *spiritual* welfare of its members, there are many objects and duties not embraced appropriately within Church jurisdiction. Its power is spiritual, and that only in an executive sense; and therefore there are many obligations resting upon men, as men or citizens, and not as Church members. A Church cannot legislate; it has no political power—it cannot connect itself with government—it cannot coerce obedience, or use force or inflict physical punishment. Long before the reformation of Luther, Baptists were hunted like wild beasts, persecuted, driven to mountain caves and fastnesses, burned, and tortured and drawn asunder for contending for liberty of conscience and freedom of God's Church from secular interference. The high honor of first asserting this great Bible right and privilege, in England and America, belongs to Baptists.

In the English revolution of 1688, our brethren labored most efficiently for the right of religious freedom, and the "right of every man to worship God as conscience dictated, in submission *only* to Divine command." These opinions, with the utmost freedom of the press and religious toleration held and promulgated by our brethren, were denounced as rebellion—as heresy—as "damnable doctrines," for which an English writer said, at the time, he would have them "exterminated from the kingdom." To the influence of the Baptists, Baxter ascribes the chief events which led to the subversion of the British Monarchy and the establishment of a Republic.

In America, a Baptist first heralded and practiced unlimited religious *freedom*. Roger Williams, expelled by religious persecution from Massachusetts, founded the colony of Rhode Island and established religious freedom; and Bancroft, the profound and philosophic historian of the United States, in his history of that event, bears this testimony—that “Mr. Williams’ colony is the witness, that *naturally* the paths of the Baptists were the paths of *freedom*, pleasantness and peace.” Their distinctive principles necessitated them to the great doctrines of freedom and toleration. In truthful accordance with their history and principles, the Baptists were the early, constant and devoted friends of our revolutionary struggle, and several Baptist preachers were in the Continental Army.

Baptist history, it has been said, is written in the “blood of myriads,” on account of their persevering advocacy of the truths above referred to; and in this country, prior to the revolution, the persecuting spirit was let loose upon them. In 1662, the following penal statute against Baptists is found disgracing the records of old Virginia:

“ART. III.—*Against persons that refuse to have their children baptised.*

“Whereas, many schismatical persons, out of their averseness to the orthodox, established religion, or out of the new-fangled conceits of their own heretical inventions, refuse to have their children baptised,

“*Be it therefore enacted, by the authority aforesaid, That all persons that, in contempt of the Divine sacrament of Baptism, shall refuse, when they may carry their child to a lawful minister in that county, to have them baptised, shall be amerced (or fined) in two thousand pounds of tobacco—halfe to the informer. and halfe to the publique.*”

Ireland, Thomas, Waller, Koontz, Craig, Westherford, Anthony, Harriss, and other Baptist preachers in Virginia were fined, imprisoned and persecuted, about the time of the commencement of our revolution. In Massachusetts, a law was passed for their suppression; and in 1644, a poor Baptist by the name of Painter, having a child born, would not suffer his wife to carry it to be baptised. Complaint being made to Court, he was enjoined to suffer its baptism. He had the impudence to tell them that infant baptism was an unchristian ordinance, for which he was tied up and whipped! For centuries has the iron heel been upon them in Europe, and but a year or two since, a poor Baptist Missionary was expelled from the learned city of Berlin! Protestant Sweden, by her intolerance, furnishes Romish bigotry with a pretext for its cruel oppression. Persecution is carried on also in protestant Germany, by government and by law, against the Baptists.



In 1852, the principality of Schaumbourg Lippe, through its reigning Prince—as he impiously asserts, “by the grace of God,”—commanded the imprisonment of all Baptist missionaries remaining in the country; the imprisonment of all natives or foreigners holding Baptist meetings, or permitting them to be held at their dwellings; and the imprisonment of all who distributed gratuitously or sold Baptist writings, or performed any of the sacraments, or ordination or marriage. For transgressing the law, with regard to the holding of meetings, six men were thrown into prison, separated from their wives and children, and treated like the worst criminals. Three women also—one with an infant six weeks old—were thrown into prison, for the unpardonable crime of being Baptists; and this in Protestant Germany, in the enlightened year of 1853!

Baptists have never persecuted for conscience' sake; but, with unbroken consistency,—attesting their sincerity by centuries of persecution and troops of martyrs—have maintained that no human authority can regulate religious duties. Through sufferings and fiery martyrdoms, these calumniated men have faithfully and steadily advocated the great truths of freedom of conscience; and now, in Great Britain and this country, it is an undisputed right. “Not unto us, Oh! Lord, not unto us—but unto thy name be all the praise!”

As a necessary corollary from the foregoing, Baptists have ever resisted the union of Church and State. Man is a voluntary being; to him is assigned a conscience, and no keeper has been appointed. That conscience cannot be transferred—no substitute is authorised—to his maker he stands or falls—and no King nor Pope can lay his edicts nor enforce his decrees over the thinking, sentient part of man. Man owes duties to society, and these he must fulfil; but there is a wide field of duties where *human* legislation cannot follow—where governments have no authority, dominion, or power,—and there the State has no right to prescribe or control opinions or form of worship, or coerce support of a system contrary to belief. “Brute force has no authority over the mind, over convictions, over truth; and this results from the distinction between the world of thought and the world of action, between our inward and intellectual nature and the outward world around us.” In all governments but ours and Switzerland this connection between Church and State exists, and it operates severely in many cases against our citizens, resident or temporarily sojourning in foreign lands. Memorials have been presented to our Congress by religious bodies, asking our government to obtain reciprocity of privileges, and from a Baptist Association was sent up the first petition for this equality of right, this privilege to worship God in foreign countries without molestation or restriction.”

As a legitimate development of Baptist principles, we deduce the doctrine of man's individuality. Birth, rank, station, descent, sponsorial performance of personal duties, entitle none to admission in the Church. Regenerating grace and voluntary obedience of faith give admission to its privileges and obligations. Each is regarded as a personal, responsible, accountable being; and no act of a religious character can be performed by proxy. Duties are enjoined on all, and obedience must be voluntary and intelligent. This truth of man's voluntariness and individuality, Dr. Williams says, shows "that crime is not misfortune or fate; it is voluntary transgression—self-chosen, self-created guilt—and as such must be repressed." The punishment is self-imposed, and each must suffer for himself, and can plead neither hereditary transgression as an excuse, nor the righteousness of a human substitute in palliation. "The wages of sin is death." "He that sinneth against God wrongeth *his own* soul."

"Every man that eateth the sour grape,  
His teeth shall be set on edge."

In perfect consistency with this, the first effect of Christian truth is to reveal man to himself, to teach him his personal accountability and immortality. Its awakening hand is laid on the individual conscience, an interview is demanded with his personal consciousness; and as he was created separately, separately he dies, separately he is judged, and separately he is saved or lost. The religion of the Bible is plain and intelligible, and free from all secrecy.\* Its doctrines are propounded to all, its duties are enjoined upon all, its blessings are offered to all, its worship is open to all. Universal in its character, it is designed for all, addressed to all, and adapted to all capacities. Each must study the Bible for himself, think for himself, pray for himself—"God, be merciful to me, a sinner,")—believe for himself,—("if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,")—repent for himself,—(God commandeth *all men*, everywhere, to repent,)—and be baptized for himself,—("be baptised, *every one* of you.") To become a member of a Church, must be a personal, voluntary act on the part of each individual. Nothing can supersede his own individual faith and obedience. Man is an intelligent, voluntary, moral agent, and must do things in his own right. There is a work for all; and, though members of one body, yet "all have not the same office." Each has his peculiar temperament, his distinctive character, his appropriate sphere. Duties cannot be shifted, responsibilities cannot be thrown aside; the appeal is directly to every man's conscience, and over-performance or neglect of performance on the part of others, neither excuses or palliates great enter-

prises, looking to the spread of the Gospel in every portion of the earth—to the evangelization of the world—smaller efforts, tending to the education of our youth, to the internal prosperity of the Churches, to the disenthralment of the ministry, to increased personal piety and holiness, are engaging public attention; and, as each man's heart is required as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and for himself each man must give an account of the deeds done in the body, so the zealous co-operation of all, as God hath prospered, is imperatively demanded. In his merciful Providence, God is opening new theaters for Christian activity, and new avenues for Christian benevolence. In consequence of the revolution, China, with her three hundred millions of souls, presents the most inviting prospect ever offered to Christian prayer and effort. Japan must unlock her gates to the Bible as well as to commerce. From the movements in Turkey, *mene, mene* seem to be written upon Mohammedan religion; and Western Asia, thronged with ten thousand hallowed recollections of primeval, and patriarchal and Christian glory, is largely inductive of thought and prayer. California is the battle ground for two antagonistic, contending, long separated civilizations; and amid these multiplied inducements to action it is now, as it ever has been, a law of our being, that our growth is dependent and consequent upon the right use of our faculties, and a part of the plan of Infinite Wisdom necessary to keep alive and increase the Christian graces in the soul, that the individual man should be developed, his own powers educated, and his personal responsibilities met with might, and diligence and faith. "Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

Divine sanction is given to man's spontaneity and individuality. God is no respecter of persons. The Gospel is a great equalizer. To the poor it is preached, ignoring all distinctions of caste, or rank, or wealth; and the Savior of mankind was the reputed son of Joseph, the carpenter.

It is characteristic of the religion of Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher, that man is regarded scarcely at all, with respect to his own individual greatness, responsibilities or destiny. He is merely one of a vast community, and for that community he must live. That impalpable abstract, society, in the aggregate, must be perfected, irrespective of the happiness of the living members composing that society. But the great mission of the Baptists, says Dr. Williams, as distinguished from other sections of true Christians, is to call each man to look to himself, to proclaim the need of personal and individual regeneration, to isolate the individual, apart from the nation, apart from the family, and to awaken him to the need for himself, personally and individually, of re-

generating grace; and, as they have dissipated the error confounding Church and State, to dissipate that other error of but little less magnitude, confounding the Church and the household.

With the Romish Church, as developed in its natural and legitimate offspring, Jesuitism, individual conscience is absorbed in that of the mass—faith in the Church is substituted for faith in Christ—and unquestioning submission and absolute obedience usurp the place of honest inquiry and responsibility to God. Baptists hold, that religion, in all its duties, is a personal matter, and that from confessionals, and penances, and vigils, and rosaries, and mediating priests the burdened soul, in its trying hour, must fling itself upon Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. In the beautiful language of one of our shining lights, "it is the genius of this system to develop the individual, and in every emergency to throw him, in the last resort, upon the lonely communings of his own soul with its Creator." It teaches him to make religion "the flight of one alone to the only one." To the place of audience, the petitioner goes by no deputy; but the individual man is brought to confront for himself the one Mediator, and to hear for himself the response of Heaven to the prayer of faith. It is said that Daniel Webster, when asked what was the most important thought that ever occupied his mind, replied with solemn emphasis and earnestness—"The most important thought that ever occupied my mind, was that of my INDIVIDUAL responsibility to God!"

For over eighteen hundred years, amid all the vicissitudes of fortune, the overthrow of governments, the rise and decadence and obliteration of languages and nations, natural and political revulsions, civil and religious disturbances, alternations of night and day, God has preserved this people as a witness of His truth. Governments have laid their heavy hands upon them; magistrates have been intemperately excited against them; bulls of Popes, and decrees of Councils and acts of Parliaments have driven them to banishment, confiscated their property, and made them exiles, homeless and houseless. The fires of the inquisition have blazed furiously around them, but thanks be to God! through his grace and mercy they have labored, and argued, and prayed, and suffered, and died, and now they are spreading over the world; one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight; their principles are recognised and incorporated in all free governments, and the Bible, Temperance, Missions, Education and all Benevolence have found in them potent and unwearied advocates. In humility we should set up our Ebenezer, in token of God's goodness; and now, as

the poor and despised Baptists—once everywhere spoken against—emerge from the darkness, and contempt, and obscurity of ages, we should devoutly pray that we may be preserved from the temptation of prosperity, and that the errors of the age may not, like the curse of Egypt, be found infesting our homes and our sanctuaries.

## **RULES OF DECORUM.**

**RULE 1.** The Association shall be opened and closed by prayer.

**2.** A Moderator and Clerk shall be chosen by the suffrages of the members present.

**3.** The names of the members shall be called each day before proceeding to business, and no member shall absent himself from the Association, unless he have leave or be sick and unable to attend.

**4.** Visiting ministering brethren present shall be invited to seats in the Association.

**5.** The Moderator shall preside over the Association, preserve order, and appoint all Committees, with the sanction of the Association.

**6.** The Moderator may speak in debate on any question—appoint some other member to fill the chair temporarily—but shall not vote, except in case of a tie.

**7.** The Moderator shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Association by any two members.

**8.** Every member, when speaking, shall rise from his seat, respectfully address the Moderator, confine himself to the question before the body, and avoid personalities.

**9.** A motion made must be seconded and stated by the Moderator before debating; and every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the Moderator or any member require it.

**10.** When a motion is stated by the Moderator, it is in possession of the Association; but may be withdrawn by the mover at any time before a decision or amendment.

**11.** When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received, except to lay on the table, to postpone indefinitely, to commit or amend; which said motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are stated; but a motion to adjourn is always in order, except when a member is speaking or the body engaged in voting.

**12.** All questions, except such as relate to the Constitution, the Rules of Decorum, or the reception or exclusion of Churches, shall be decided by a majority of votes; in the excepted cases, two-thirds are required.

13. In filling blanks with particular numbers, the question shall first be taken on the highest number and longest time.

14. When a motion has once been decided, a member voting with the majority may move for a reconsideration on the same day.

15. No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, and no member shall speak more than twice on the same proposition without leave of the Association.

16. No practice shall be allowed which has a tendency to interrupt speaking or the business of the Association.

17. The appellation of "brother" shall be used by members in their addresses one to another.

18. The Clerk shall read these rules at the opening of every session of the Association.

19. Any member violating these rules shall be reprimanded by the Moderator.